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Anime & Manga Monthly

ANIME AMERICA

Vol. 4, No. 9



ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS

Creator **RYOSUKE TAKAHASHI** on How to Create a Mecha Legend

CONVENTION
'96

**PART
TWO**

Costumes and More
On the Anime Nation
Convention Trail

MANGA FEATURE

Their Destiny Was Foreordained

X/1999 by Clamp



*Anime on sale this month in Japan and the
U.S. 15*

CATCH UP WITH POPULAR VOICE-ACTORS SOUND BITES

*ANIMERICA talks to the brightest stars of the
domestic voice-acting industry. Meet **TOBY
PROCTOR, SAILOR MOON's** "Tuxedo
Mask"! 22*

LETTERS FROM OUR READERS ANIMESSAGES

*"That's a good place to start"
or
"Flare up now!"*

It's always wonderful when someone you know or admire succeeds at something. That's why it was such a pleasure—an illicit thrill, almost—to go to a bargain matinee performance of the first **TALES FROM THE CRYPT** theatrical feature, **BORDELLO OF BLOOD**, starring **SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE** veteran Dennis Miller, **UNDER SIEGE**'s Erika Eleniak, and **THE LOST BOYS** Corey Feldman.

And of course, **RONIN WARRIORS**' Matt Hill.

Okay, so maybe Matt's name wasn't up there in lights on the marquee, but as far as those of us at the Kabuki Cinema in San Francisco's "Japantown" center were concerned, Matt was the outing's entire *raison d'être*.

The actors up in Vancouver have this joke, you see—in most any locally filmed production, there are roles, and then there are Vancouver roles. An example of a role is FBI Agent Fox Mulder; a Vancouver role is the guy who gives Agent Mulder his coffee.

So that's why, taken in context, Matt Hill's role as Corey Feldman's pierced-nose pal (he's the one who gets hit with the dart in his—
...Well, we'd best let you experience *that* scene for yourself) is so exciting to those of us who enjoyed him not only as **RONIN WARRIORS**' "Ryo of Wildfire," but as **FATAL FURY: THE MOTION PICTURE**'s psychic twin, "Laocorn," as well as **PLEASE SAVE MY EARTH**'s psychic friend, "Mikuro."

Matt, buddy, we luv ya...even if you do end up as vampire bait.

* * * * *

Hanging out with actors is always fun, of course; it's something I suspect many of our readers learned during this past summer convention season. At Anime Expo, fans were completely charmed by the anime voices of **TENCHI**'s "Ryoko" and "Sasami"...not only in Japanese, but also in English, as both casts from Tokyo and L.A. were on hand to meet fans, sign autographs, and tell unforgettable stories ("So, Chisa Yokoyama, how did you become a voice-actor?" "One night, as I was sleeping, God came down from heaven and whispered into my ear, 'Become a voice-actor'....").

At Anime America, fans not only got to meet the above-mentioned Matt Hill, but Toby Proctor ("Tuxedo Mask," **SAILOR MOON**), Jason Gray-Stanford ("Godai," **MAISON IKKOKU**), Paul Dobson ("Happosai," **RANMA 1/2**), Janyse Jaud ("Akemi," **MAISON IKKOKU**), and Cathy Weseluck ("Shampoo," **RANMA 1/2**). Voice-acting workshops (such as the one wherein Toby explained the incredibly awkward-sounding way they record

SAILOR MOON in Toronto) were well-attended and very popular, and we're sure everyone was happy for the opportunity to put the faces to the names of their favorite anime-in-English voice-actors.

* * * * *

Speaking of anime in English, over the past four years, we've really seen a lot of changes in the domestic industry. For example, most of the earlier U.S.-released anime titles—**DEVIL HUNTER YOHKO**, **MADOX-01**, **DOMINION**, **TENCHI**, **GUNBUSTER**, **MERMAID'S SCAR**—weren't movies or television series, but OAV or direct-to-home-video series.

Nowadays, of course, we've still got the movies, we've still got the OAVs, but with ever-increasing frequency, we've also got more TV series than ever before. A.D. Vision is releasing **BLUE SEED** and **EVANGELION**; Pioneer's got both the **TENCHI** and **EL-HAZARD** TV series; Software Sculptors' has **DANCOUGAR** and **SLAYERS**; U.S. Manga Corps has **VOTOMAS**; and of course, Viz Video's got **MAISON IKKOKU** and the long-running **RANMA 1/2** (28 episodes from now, we'll be halfway through the series!).

The thing about ongoing TV series, unlike the more complete-in-themselves movies and OAVs, is that they require a lot of attention. Sure, the first couple of volumes in any series will always attract a lot of attention, but once you start getting up there (say, anything past Volume 10), it takes a concerted effort to keep the titles fresh in the eyes of the anime-buying public.

In Japan, there's an entire infrastructure devoted to anime in general. There are magazines like ANIME V, ANIMEDIA, ANIMAGE, and NEWTYPE; venues where anime films are regularly screened, such as Theater Apple in Ikebukuro; even voice-actor

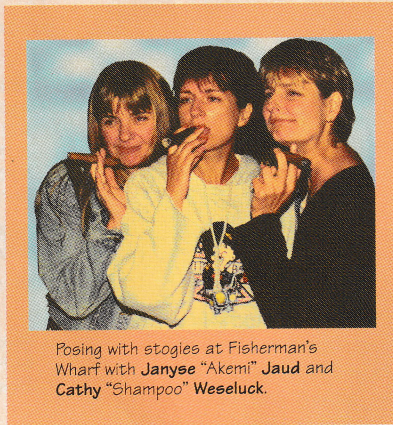
events where fans can regularly bask in the presence of luminaries such as Megumi Hayashibara and, yes Chisa Yokoyama.

ANIMERICA wants to see more anime TV shows in America. Within the next few issues, look for increased regular coverage on anime-in-English TV shows, including "you are here"-type series chronologies and episode timelines, behind-the-scenes info on new and upcoming characters, as well as hot scoops straight from the U.S. companies themselves.

We think having anime on broadcast TV is pretty neat, too. But until the time comes when there's a different anime show on the air every day of the week, being able to go into your local video outlet and buy it on home video has *gotta* be the next best thing.

Trish

Trish Ledoux
Editor



Posing with stogies at Fisherman's Wharf with Janyse "Akemi" Jaud and Cathy "Shampoo" Weseluck.

FIRST, SPACE BATTLESHIP YAMATO SET SAIL IN THE SEA OF STARS
NEXT, SPACE PIRATE CAPTAIN HARLOCK SOUGHT HIS VENGEANCE
THEN, GALAXY EXPRESS 999 BEGAN AN OUTER SPACE ODYSSEY THAT IS FINALLY COMING TO AMERICA...

They call it a "classic" for a reason.

Leiji Matsumoto's

galaxy express 999

The Signature Edition

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ROBOTS AND RAWHIDE

A veteran writer/director who's worked steadily in the anime industry throughout the years, **RYOSUKE TAKAHASHI** earned his mecha spurs on Sunrise mecha shows such as **DOUGRAM**, **LAYZNER**, **GUNDAM 0083** and of course, the now domestically available **VOTOMS**. Discover the hidden links between robots, *rakugo* and Steve McQueen rodeo movies in our exclusive interview. Interview by **Takayuki Karahashi**

"I started out at Osamu Tezuka's Mushi Production—that's where I studied directing," says mecha director extraordinaire Ryosuke Takahashi. "Although, for the first year, I was in production management. That's a position where you can most conveniently learn all the processes involved in animation." As an animator, Takahashi has been in the industry a long time—he joined Mushi Production in the early 1960s, just a few years after the company was first formed. His first (uncredited) project—"in production," as he puts it—was on Mushi's star series, the start of Japanese TV animation as we know it: **TETSUWAN ATOM (ASTRO BOY)**, in 1963. Takahashi had no special training when he joined the studio; he learned animation on the job, and moved into directing with the following year's TV series, **WONDER 3**, working directly with Tezuka himself. "It was a small company, although it was the largest one outside of Toei back then," Takahashi remembers. "Osamu Tezuka himself was the chief director for **WONDER 3**, so I worked directly with him. Among all the people I've worked with directly, he was the most talented, and back then, his works were the ones I liked the most, so I was very excited to start work there." When asked what it was like to work with the legendary "god of manga," Takahashi remarks with a smile, "Aside from his talent, he was a creator after all, so ultimately speaking, he was a man of no small ego. His attitude toward his work, that is."

Even with this auspicious beginning, looking back, Takahashi remembers that his childhood dream wasn't to become an animator, but a toy designer. "There was no deep reason behind that. I was a child, after all, and just wanted to make toys and hoped that could be my occupation. These days, I often work with the very people making toys, so I think that's an interesting quirk of fate. Also, I wanted to become a *rakugo* teller [A traditional Japanese comic storyteller—Ed.]. That didn't have a deep reason either—I just liked *rakugo*."

Takahashi's reputation among mecha fans may well be another "quirk of fate," but it's a well-earned one. Even though he describes himself as someone who is "not particularly fluent in mecha," Takahashi is still perhaps best known today as one of the triumvirate of directors—along with **MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM**'s Yoshiyuki Tomino and **ROUND VERNIAN VIFAM**'s Takeyuki Kanda—who helmed most of the mecha TV series which dominated the Japanese airwaves in the 1980s. Takahashi's shows—**FANG OF THE SUN DOUGRAM** (1981), **ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS** (1983), **PANZER WORLD GALIENT** (1984) and **BLUE METEOR SPT LAYZNER** (1985) were dark, gritty, action-packed sci-fi—and mecha is still the genre he returns to when creating his own stories, even though he never hesitates to work in other genres. Takahashi has even done writing and directing for such lighthearted anime as **RED HOOD CHA CHA**, **NURSE ANGEL LILICA S.O.S.** and **KODOMO NO OMOCHA**. "These are all shows made at a company where the president is a friend of mine," Takahashi says, "So I got involved by way of helping a friend...and it just so happened that they made a lot of *shôjo* shows. Their staff had many *shôjo* fans, but I had to teach them how to make stories with the proper exposition-development-twist-conclusion form. Otherwise, when animators who like a particular genre go out and work on that genre, they tend to go out of control in a bad sense...and they sometimes end up with an unmarketable film."

"I don't think I'm really destined for mainstream success myself," he continues, "but I think I know how to be objective about works that aren't my own. When it comes to directing my own creations, I'm not as good at appealing to the lowest common denominator," he laughs.

Aside from his anime work, Takahashi also writes novelizations—currently finishing a **KODOMO NO OMOCHA** book, he plans to begin a **VOTOMS** novel once it is finished—and directs live stage plays. His most recent stage productions include a story based on **VOTOMS**, and another "present-day story that takes place in a restaurant with a man and a woman."

"Doing live is fun," Takahashi reflects, "but I think I enjoy film more. Since I once wanted to become a *rakugo* teller, I would love live performances if I were actually performing. But as for directing, I think it's more fun to be directing film than stage."

But even with all his diverse projects, it's still the '80s robot shows and the more recent gritty battle dramas such as **THE COCKPIT** and **THE SILENT SERVICE** with which most fans associate Takahashi—but despite his protestations, the label of "mecha director" doesn't really seem like a bad fit. His current project, tentatively titled "The Ryosuke Takahashi Project," is, at the moment, in its early planning stage.

"It'll be about robots again," Takahashi smiles, "But I always want to do something new with robots. I don't know yet if they will be something to be piloted or worn, but it'll definitely be a new take on the robot genre."

BEGIN INTERVIEW

ANIMERICA: Since you're probably best known as a mecha director...what would you say is the appeal of mecha?

Takahashi: Actually, I'm always frustrated by this question. I don't think I'm particularly strong doing mecha shows. It just so happened that the shows I directed at Sunrise were mecha shows. So the audience might take it differently, but I think my distinguishing mark is mecha depicted from the perspective of someone who's not necessarily fluent in mecha.

ANIMERICA: Speaking of perspectives, I think **VOTOMS** depicts a man's world. It doesn't have many female characters. Is it easier to work from a male perspective?

Takahashi: Well, you can say that I find it easier to portray men than women. Of course, I'm fond of women, but I'm not necessarily drawn toward *drawing* women. So females tend to be few in my works.

ANIMERICA: What would you say is the most important aspect in making a robot show? Would it be the drama, mecha, story, characters?

Takahashi: Well, I can just confess and say they're all important for the show's success, but my own standard for a robot show's success is whether its robots have a definitive role in the story. In **VOTOMS**, that would be the position of the robots as mere weapons in war that gives flavor to the story.



ANIMERICA: So, that's whether you can effectively use the robots as props.

Takahashi: Yes, whether I can keep their position as weapons of warfare in the context of that world.

ANIMERICA: As for **VOTOMS** itself, where did you get the inspiration for the story?

Takahashi: Well, at the very beginning was an American movie—it was a rodeo story, **JUNIOR BONNER**. They'd travel from town to town in a trailer doing rodeo shows. That was the movie inspiration. So the first idea for **VOTOMS** was to set it right after the end of some war, and the towns are full of surplus robots, like the ones in **VOTOMS**, and they'd do rodeo attractions with them, and fight against each other as a spectator sport. A drifter would be among those competitors. That was the original idea. Also, from my own experience, right after the end of WW II, there were a lot of jeeps in town. Although they were war vehicles, they showed up in town as daily-use vehicles, and were used for wilderness driving and for construction. I've always had that picture in mind. I wanted to make a story about robots that were made for war but ended up being used in non-war places. They'd fight against each other and be the object of betting. The robot "pilots" are all career soldiers, so they don't know how else to make a living.

ANIMERICA: So they fight against each other. Are you familiar with a video game called **Battletech**?

Takahashi: No. I'm not interested in video games, so I've never played any.

ANIMERICA: It's a multiplayer game where you sit inside robot cockpits and fight against each other. Perhaps the times are finally catching up with **VOTOMS**. By the way, in the U.S., there's a persistent rumor that Chirico's role model is the American actor Steve McQueen. Any truth to this?

Takahashi: No, I just like Steve McQueen. He's not really Chirico's model. Steve McQueen isn't that expressionless. In fact, he looks more like a wrinkled-up monkey. [LAUGHS] I've always liked Steve McQueen from the time he was in the **WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE** TV series.

ANIMERICA: If Chirico's expressionless...well, would he be modeled after other western heroes?

Takahashi: Well...as for westerns, in **JUNIOR BONNER**, the main character [Steve McQueen—Ed.] keeps his horse in his trailer, and that's the situational model. But there isn't any direct character model for Chirico. He was created for that show and came to life with Norio Shioyama's character designs. That's because he's a character who was already a soldier by the time he could remember things and doesn't know any other way of life. Suddenly, the war ends and he's thrown out into town to fend for himself. He has a hard time mixing in. I first thought of making it a story about the social rehabilitation of this misfit who's at the end of his boyhood and at the beginning of youthhood. So there is really no specific model for him.

ANIMERICA: Do you ever watch an anime TV show and think that it's a good story, but it'd be even more interesting with robots?

Takahashi: I don't really watch other anime TV shows. Right now, I *am* working on ideas for a completely new robot show that'll be my original. It'll have robots, and although I don't know yet if they'll be the main feature, there's no way that robots *won't* show up. It isn't so much that it's descended from other mecha shows, but it's been about ten years, and producers are starting to think that they could use an original "Takahashi" show again. But I don't really watch other shows. Just the same as the way I turn the fact that I'm not that fluent in mecha to my advantage, I'd like to turn my lack of watching other shows, and my vow to not play any video games, into a way to preserve my innocence of thought, where I can come up with original perspectives. I'm afraid that if I watch the same shows everyone else is watching, I'll be left with the same perspective as everyone else, and that might deprive my own works of originality. So

if I'm to watch anything, I'd like to be watching something different. That's why I do stage. I'm hoping stage can breathe a new kind of life into animation.

ANIMERICA: You have been involved in the production of many mecha shows, especially in the 1980s, but did you have any involvement with any of the **MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM** series?

Takahashi: I wasn't involved in **GUNDAM**. I was making a show called **CYBORG 009** back then. I was never involved in **GUNDAM**.

ANIMERICA: Why was that? It seems unusual, seeing that you're a noted director of mecha shows.

Takahashi: The reason? Well, I am of the same generation as **GUNDAM**'s creator and director Yoshiyuki Tomino—we went through the same periods at the same company, Sunrise, where I made my robot shows. So when Tomino was working on something, that meant that I was working on something. I wouldn't have been able to work on the same thing he was doing.

ANIMERICA: Weren't you involved a little in the original video series, **GUNDAM 0083: STARDUST MEMORIES**, though?

Takahashi: Oh, right, **0083**. I wrote the script for that. A junior director of mine when I was at Sunrise was directing it, and I was asked to do the script. That's how I wrote a few episodes for it. [Episodes 8 and 10—Ed.]

ANIMERICA: So you did that to help someone out.

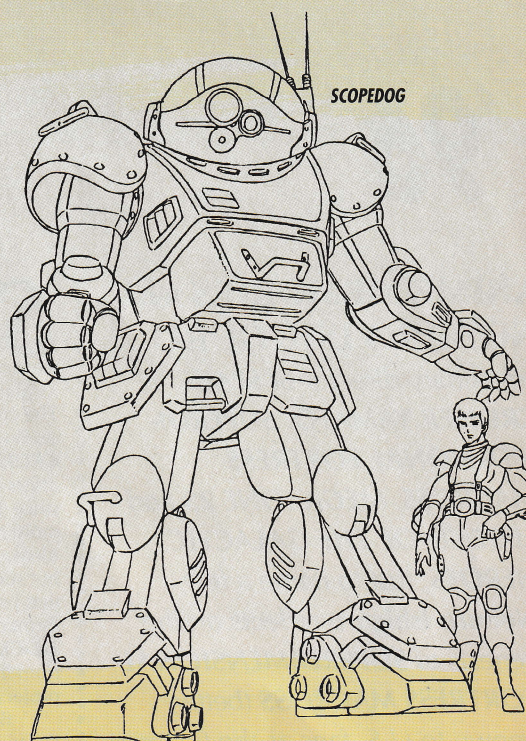
Takahashi: That's right—**0083**'s director changed in mid-production. In fact, the whole staff changed, and there was a staff shortage. That's how my junior friend ended up asking for me.

ANIMERICA: If you look at the new TV shows that are called **GUNDAM** these days, they're nothing like the original **GUNDAM** by Tomino.

Takahashi: True.

ANIMERICA: By that token, do you have any urge to get involved now, maybe create your own **GUNDAM** universe?

Takahashi: No. Unlike the works I've done, **GUNDAM** is a diverse story. I think it's okay for Tomino to keep on doing **GUNDAM** sequels himself, but if anyone else were to make a **GUNDAM** type of story, I think they should be from the generation who grew up on the show. I don't think someone from the same generation as Tomino should work on a **GUNDAM** show. Realistically speaking, I don't think such a show would be accepted.



JAMES TEAL'S

Mecha File

Scopedog: ATM-09-ST

(Armored Trooper Medium-Grade, Series 9, Standard)

This is the standard A.T. of the Gilgamesh forces. Adaptable, and often heavily modified, the mass-produced Scopedog is so ubiquitous that many are found in civilian use as well as military, rather like army jeeps. As with almost all A.T.s, Scopedogs execute the majority of their combat maneuvers using the motorized glide wheels in their feet for "roller dash" at speeds in excess of fifty miles per hour. They turn and brake using "turnpicks," spikes on the side of each foot that can drive into the ground on command. Scopedogs are also equipped with the "Armored Punch" system for close attacks. This is basically a shell-assisted punch, where the explosive cartridge boosts the limb forward at extreme velocity to maximum extension, the spent casing ejecting as another shell is loaded. The impact from such shots is substantial enough to dent and sometimes puncture most A.T. armor. For ranged combat most A.T.s carry some form of rifle, rocket launcher or other firearm. The Scopedog normally comes with the GAT-22, a 30mm heavy machine gun.



Ryosuke Takahashi Mini-Bio

Birthdate: 11 January 1943 (Showa 18)

Blood Type: Type A

Marital Status: Married

Star Sign: Capricorn

Favorite Movie: "People often ask you to give your three most favorite movies, and you know your most

favorite title has to be in that list. But when you try to select that one, you can't. Well, anyway, I'll give you a title. It's a French movie titled **LES AVENTURIERS** co-starring Alain Delon and Lina Ventura, and the heroine is Joanna Shimkus. I like this movie."

Favorite Animation: "There are works that I respect, for example, the **HEIDI OF THE ALPS** TV show. As for Miyazaki, I like **CASTLE OF CAGLIOSTRO** the best."

ANIME MEMORIES with NOBURO ISHIGURO

Legendary director of *SPACE CRUISER YAMATO*, *SUPERDIMENSIONAL FORTRESS MACROSS*, *MEGAZONE 23* and *LEGEND OF THE GALACTIC HEROES*, just to name a few, **Noburo Ishiguro** reflects on the genesis of *SUPERDIMENSIONAL FORTRESS MACROSS* (better known to U.S. fans as the first part of *ROBOTECH*).

• • • SUPERDIMENSIONAL FORTRESS MACROSS

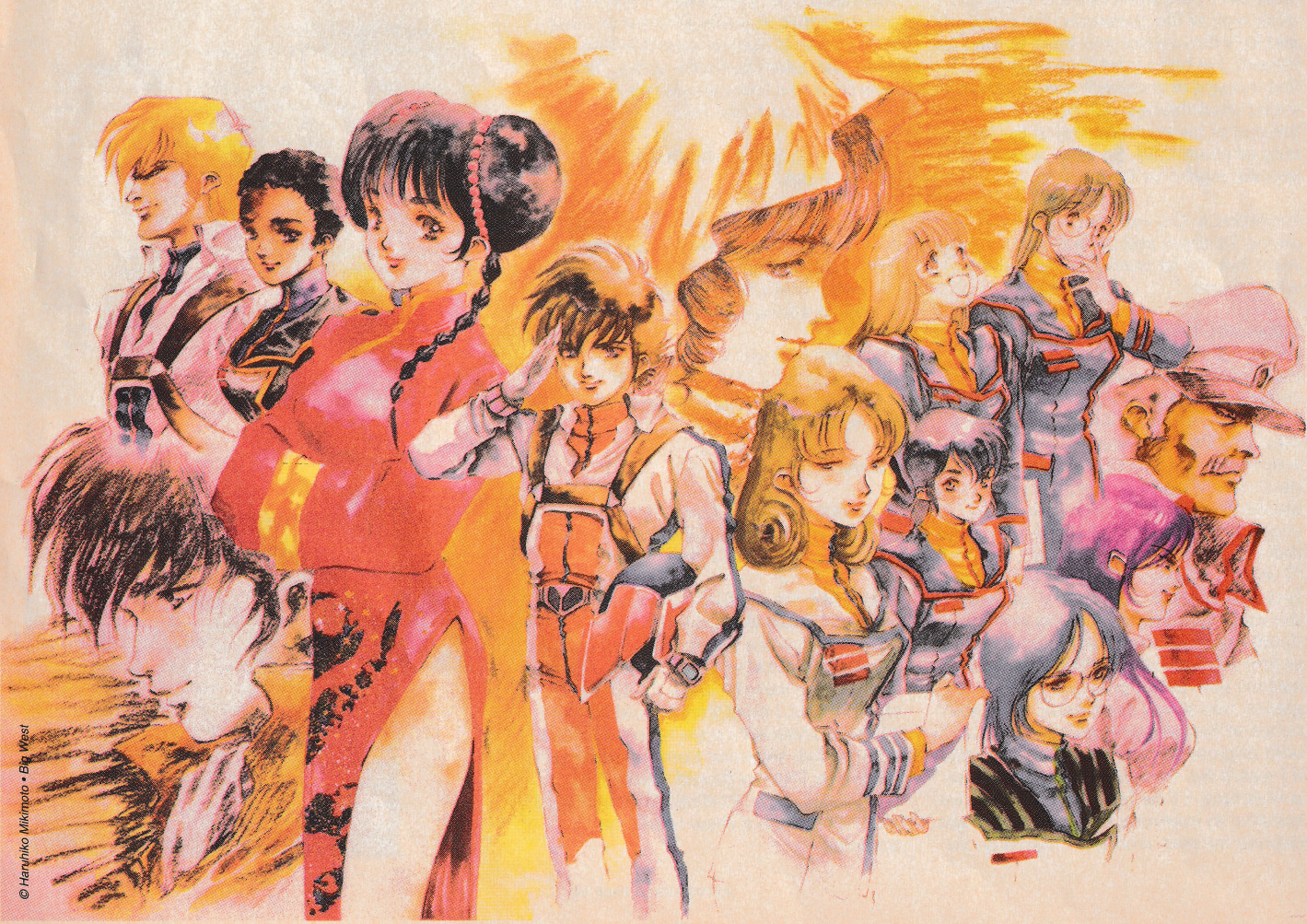
• went on the air in October of 1982, but actually, its planning had started over a year before that. The core planners were Studio Nue, the same studio that did the mecha designs for *SPACE CRUISER YAMATO*. They used to be a group of artists drawing science fiction illustrations, but since *YAMATO*, they had been getting more and more animation mecha design work and story ideas. Naturally more ideas were junk than not, but some of those ideas were pretty good. One that I still remember was a palace that transformed into a giant robot called *PALACE ROBO DOCKINGHAM*. Actually, *MACROSS* was made from the salvaged pieces of all of those junked project ideas.

• Back then, there was a group of college students who hung out at Studio Nue. Two of those students were Haruhiko Mikimoto and Shoji

Kawamori. They were sophomores at Keio University. Under Studio Nue's personnel strategy, Mikimoto was sent to my studio to study animation. He'd go to regular school in the morning and learn animation at the studio in the afternoon. But then he started spending more and more time at our place, and eventually, he ended up staying at the studio over many nights. He ended up dropping out of school.

The idea for *MACROSS* was crafted over a year. This wasn't so much to ensure a "quality" show as to buy the studio time, as there weren't good time slots available for TV, and other unsatisfactory conditions. But in the meantime, Mikimoto was able to polish his characters, and Nue's Kazutake Miyatake and Kawamori created numerous mecha designs. Not many animated TV shows get this much preparation time.

Among those designs, the Valkyrie that Kawamori made is still a classic. He came up with the transformation by folding models out of newspaper. A new product was necessary for the



show's main sponsor, the toy company. Kawamori showed me the newspaper Valkyrie and said, "See, you do this, and the fighter transforms into a robot." It looked great. But in order to make a toy exactly that way, very expensive components would have been necessary. Considering the inflexibility of plastic, a faithful transformation would have been impossible.

It's very rare that a beautifully transforming mecha in the anime transforms just as well in the toy version. A good example is **MOSPEADA (ROBOTECH: THE NEW GENERATION)**. There's a motorcycle in that show that transforms into a robot, but the toy doesn't transform as smoothly as in the animation—it's necessary to remove a piece of the bike and remount it elsewhere. We all thought that this type of thing was inevitable.

Then, one day the prototype for the toy arrived at our studio, and we were really surprised. The perfect transformation that we'd given up on took place right in front of our eyes! Kawamori was the one most surprised. We then heard that there were only a few companies in Japan that could make this model, and that the best among them had been asked to do it—they even took out a few patents for this Valkyrie's transformation. When we saw the transformable toy just as it was designed, we were like the apes who saw the Monolith.

One day, Kawamori said that he knew someone really good at animating mecha, and brought in a young man. His name was Ichiro Itano. Back then, he was a freelance animator who liked working on mecha scenes, such as in Sunrise's **GUNDAM**. But he was also a meticulous man. He wouldn't finish ten cuts in a month. Japanese animators get paid by the amount of work done, so he couldn't make a living with just that. He lived a hard life where he was an animator by day, and a truck driver by night. We made him a mecha animation director so that he could concentrate just on the animation. Then Itano brought in two of his friends, Toshihiro Hirano and Narumi Kakinouchi. The two of them brought more friends and formed a work group. But two problems arose there.

The first was that Studio Nue, and we at Artland, were supposed to make this show. But the ad agency Big West must have had doubts that we could meet the weekly schedule. They moved the main production to Tatsunoko studio. Tatsunoko must have been annoyed by the extra work that came out of nowhere, and they just farmed it out to their subsidiary studio, Anime Friend. As a result, we ended up making only two out of each five episodes. Anime Friend just farmed out the other three episodes to Korea. As a result, the series ended up with episodes of uneven quality. It wasn't that the Korean staff was bad; they just weren't as dedicated to the work. For example, Itano held onto his animation director work until the last minute. It would be three days before air date, when we'd have to make the film or we just wouldn't make it, and I'd ask Itano to give me all the animation pencils he had. He'd just disappear with that work, and with a day and a half to spare, he'd reappear with all his work finished. The in-betweeners and painters would work like mad and finish the animation in the nick of time. The staff had no time to sleep, and it was tough on us, but we were determined to make a better show. On the

other hand, Anime Friend's production site was so far away that it seemed to contribute to the lack of dedicated staff. (On a side note, a few years later, I found it funny that in the American show **ROBOTECH**, the director was credited as Ippei Kuri—Ippei Kuri is the pen name of Anime Friend's president.) But the lack of production power was evident, so even if we'd tried to produce the show ourselves, some deadlines wouldn't have been met.

The second problem was closer to us, and graver. Because young staff members were assigned to both the character animation director and mecha animation director positions, all of our veteran animators walked out all at once. We had to be resolved to make the show entirely with young staff. That gave us a relational problem. TV stations and ad agencies judge by the staff's track record. At that time, the only one with a track record was me. Fortunately, the producer at the TV station trusted me and gave me free rein, so we were able to do the best we could.

Then there was the problem with the ad agency's president. He was a big Shakespeare fan. Initially, we were calling the show "Overlord." But he said that "Overlord" would have a weak impact on kids and insisted that the show be titled "Macbeth." We banged our heads when we heard that, and said we'd come up with something else, and held an emergency conference. We couldn't completely ignore what the president had said, but we thought that "Macbeth Robo" would be too grim, so we put our heads together and came up with "Macross."

The air-time for the show was decided to be 1:00 p.m. on Sundays. To be more specific, a new "anime hour," with **RAINBOW MAN** at 1:00 and **MACROSS** at 1:30, was created. At first we were against it, saying that there'd be no one watching animation at that kind of time, but the TV station politics of the moment wouldn't allow otherwise. Since the show had more depth than traditional animation, we'd wanted to stock up on as many episodes as possible, but we were only able to finish two episodes. Then, right before air-date, the TV station told us that the first week would be a "**MACROSS** Special Hour." So already, on the first week, we'd used up our stock.

The real reason seemed to be that on **RAINBOW MAN**, production had fallen behind, and it wasn't even going to make the first air-date! And so as a result, our meager stock disappeared, and the worst thing happened—we had to deliver a film to the station on its airdate, already, by the second week!

So, every Sunday at 6:00 a.m., the finished film would be screened at the film developer's, and the station's producer would take the film to deliver it to Osaka on the bullet train. The key feed station was in Osaka, and from there the film would be sent to the networks in Tokyo and then all over the country. Just for this, the producer had to come to work every Sunday, and run to the prefecture all by himself. This was the way it was until the end of the series, but our producer never complained, and he always let us handle the content of the show ourselves. I'm still grateful to him for that, but I heard later that he was always ready with a filler show every week, in case the episode didn't make it.

A year before that, Toshio Okada of Daicon

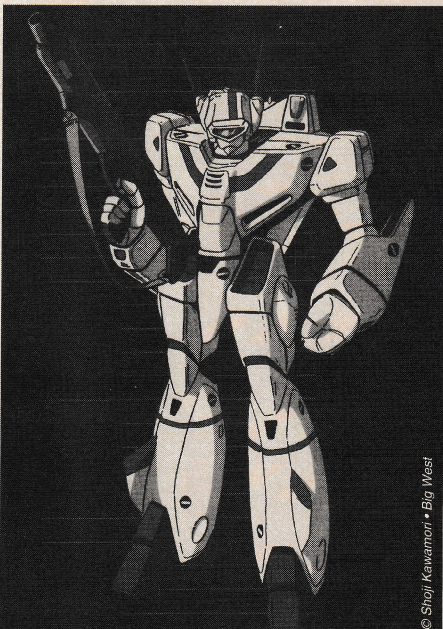
Film in Osaka said he wanted to give pro training to the college students who made the Daicon III Opening Anime. People like Hiroyuki Yamaga, and Hideaki Anno, and Yoshiyuki Sadamoto came over to my studio to stay and help us out. We were always shorthanded, so we let these kids, who were so eager to help us, help out. If this experience made any positive contribution to what they made at Gainax in later years, I'd be happy.

When Episode Seven was finished and dubbed, the courier forgot the film on the train—he left it there on his way back to the studio. The airdate was in three days, so we scrambled to look for it, but it seemed someone took it away, and we couldn't find it. We had to reprint the film, and edit it according to the dub. But strangely enough, the audio and video track never matched, no matter what we did. We had to use un-synched film, and redub it later. And a month later, the missing film showed up in some garbage dump.

By the latter half of the series, our relationship with Anime Friend had increasingly deteriorated. We didn't like Anime Friend's lack of dedication—for them, it must have looked like they were suffering as much as we did, but only Mikimoto and Itano were getting everyone's attention. Honestly speaking, though, most of my energy was used up in talking and fighting with Anime Friend rather than directing. So by the end, I was all tired out.

As you know, the young men of then went on to work on various different shows. Perhaps we did muck up the traditional hierarchies in the animation industry, and I don't know if that was good or bad. But, as the TV station's producer said to me, "If we gathered the same people now, I don't think we'd be able to make the same show again. It was the times that allowed us to make it." I think he was right. ★

Excerpted from a speech given at Anime Expo '96 and reprinted with permission.





THE ANIMERICA TOP TEN

AMERICA'S BESTSELLING ANIME

Due to recent upheavals among U.S. comics distributors, the sales figures for America's ten best-selling anime videos are not available at press time. Look to this space for an update in future issues.



DOMESTIC LASER DISC

9/3	BURN UP W! • FILE 1: SKIN DIVE [BILINGUAL, CLOSED-CAPTIONED] A.D. Vision • US\$39.95
9/10	BLUE SEED DELUXE EDITION 1 [BILINGUAL, CLOSED-CAPTIONED] A.D. Vision • US\$39.95
9/11	OH MY GODDESS! • HYBRID LD #2 ["HYBRID"] AnimEigo • US\$39.95
9/24	SUKEBAN DEKA • VOL. 2 [BILINGUAL, CLOSED-CAPTIONED] A.D. Vision • US\$39.95
9/25	OH MY GODDESS! • HYBRID LD #3 ["HYBRID"] AnimEigo • US\$39.95



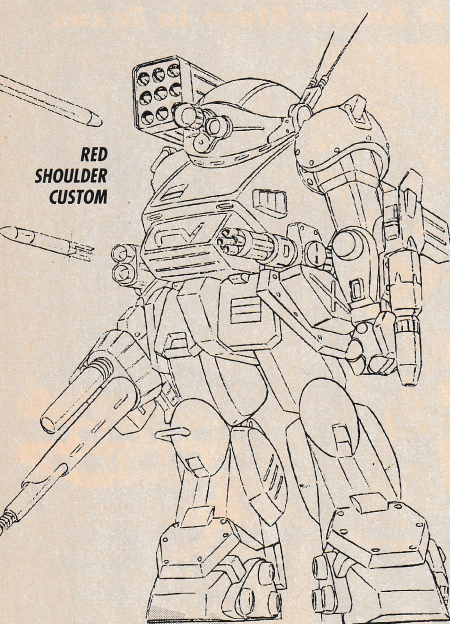
ENGLISH VHS

9/3	BATTLE SKIPPER • VOL. 2 U.S. Manga Corps • US\$12.95
9/3	RUMIC WORLD (RUMIK WORLD) FIRE TRIPPER, LAUGHING TARGET, MARIS THE CHOJO, MERMAID FOREST U.S. Manga Corps • US\$14.95 each
9/6	RANMA 1/2 HARD BATTLE: ONCE UPON A TIME IN JUSENKYO Viz Video • US\$24.95
9/17	GALAXY EXPRESS 999: THE SIGNATURE EDITION Viz Video • US\$24.95
9/17	SUPER ATRAGON • VOL. 2 A.D. Vision • US\$29.95
9/24	BURN UP W! • VOL. 2 A.D. Vision • US\$19.98
9/24	DRAGON BALL CURSE OF THE BLOOD RUBIES, SECRET OF THE DRAGON BALL, THE NIMBUS CLOUD OF ROSHI Kidmark • US\$12.99 each
9/24	GUYVER • VOL. 8 Manga Entertainment • US\$12.95
9/24	JUNK BOY Manga Entertainment • US\$19.95
9/24	MAD BULL • VOL. 4 Manga Entertainment • US\$19.95
9/24	VIOLENCE JACK • VOL. 1 Manga Entertainment • US\$19.95
9/25	OH MY GODDESS!: FOR THE LOVE OF GODDESS AnimEigo • US\$14.95



SUBTITLED VHS

9/3	DELUXE ARIEL • VOL. 2 U.S. Manga Corps • US\$29.95
9/3	ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS STAGE 1: UODOO CITY • VOLS. 1-5 U.S. Manga Corps • US\$24.95 each
9/3	ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS STAGE 1: UODOO CITY BOX SET U.S. Manga Corps • US\$99.95
9/3	DEMON BEAST INVASION • VOL. 6 Anime 18 • US\$29.95
9/3	GALAXY FRAULEIN YUNA • VOL. 2 A.D. Vision • US\$29.95
9/3	WEATHER REPORT GIRL • PART 2 The Right Stuf • US\$24.95
9/13	MAISON IKKOKU: WELCOME TO MAISON IKKOKU Viz Video • US\$29.95
9/17	GALAXY EXPRESS 999: THE SIGNATURE EDITION Viz Video • US\$29.95
9/17	SUPER ATRAGON • VOL. 2 A.D. Vision • US\$29.95
9/20	RANMA 1/2 ANYTHING-GOES MARTIAL ARTS: COLD COMPETITION Viz Video • US\$29.95
9/24	BURN UP W! • VOL. 2 A.D. Vision • US\$24.95
9/24	GUNBUSTER • VOL. 2 Manga Entertainment • US\$19.95



JAMES TEAL'S

Mecha File

Red Shoulder Custom: No more Mr. Nice Guy! Chirico raids the Uoodo Battling storerooms for parts and modifies a Scopedog to be like those of the old elite Red Shoulder Battalion—in other words, armed to the teeth. This monstrosity includes a 9-shot rocket pod, dual missile launcher, anti-personnel gatling gun and solid shooter.

ANIMERICA: Your next work is going to be the new *yūsha* ("Hero") series show. What's that work going to be like?

Takahashi: Well, unlike *GUNDAM*, the *yūsha* series wasn't created by one person like Tomino, so I think anyone is allowed to work on it. I won't be involved in it as a director, though, but as a producer. I'd like to discover new people who can direct robot shows doing this. I think *yūsha* series shows are traditional—not that I'm sure if "traditional" can properly describe any robot show—but I think they demand that kind of quality. Shows that have proper exposition-development-twist-conclusions, yet have simple stories—yet those simple stories need to be directed so they are entertaining. That's the kind of talent I'd like to dig up.

ANIMERICA: Can you tell us anything about what kind of show it will be?

Takahashi: Well, the new show still has many things I can't discuss yet, but the basic concept will still be in line with the previous *yūsha* shows, so I don't think it'll have anything really revolutionary.

ANIMERICA: So once again, it'll be hyperactive kids saving the day.

Takahashi: Well yes, but the *yūsha* will get more screen time.

ANIMERICA: I'd like to ask you about your non-*VOTOMS* shows. What were the inspi-

rations for shows like *GALIENT* and *LAYZNER*?

Takahashi: I've worked on four robot shows at Sunrise. *DOUGRAM*, *VOTOMS*, *GALIENT*, and *LAYZNER*. I don't know what the viewers thought, but I like to think I've made different shows. The same person designed the robots for *DOUGRAM* and *VOTOMS* [Kunio Okawara, also the mecha designer for Takahashi's other two Sunrise shows, *GALIENT* and *LAYZNER*—Ed.] so they might have some visual similarities, but they do have different kinds of robots with different world-views, and different intentions. In *DOUGRAM*, I wanted to depict a society in a world that required robots. In *VOTOMS*, I wanted to depict the plight of one individual and robots as mere tools. In *GALIENT*...well, video games may have popularized the notion of robots based on western armor now, but back then, the motif was considered a sure flop, so I wanted to challenge that. So the intention behind *GALIENT* was doing a medieval knights story with robots in place of regular armor. In *LAYZNER*, I wanted to work on something I hadn't before; that is, robots that are like fighter planes. *DOUGRAM* robots would just run, thump, thump. Visually, that lacked a sense of speed. *VOTOMS* robots got smaller and had the "roller dash." *GALIENT* had the heroic fantasy taste. I wanted to do fighter plane-style robots—something I hadn't done before—in *LAYZNER*.

ANIMERICA: *LAYZNER* is a group story, while *VOTOMS* focuses on an individual. Is this one of your intentional differentiations?

Takahashi: Yes, and also, *LAYZNER* was made at the same studio that made *ROUND VERNIAN VIFAM*. It was still within the same Sunrise company, but I was the one who moved to that studio to make *LAYZNER*, and that studio had a successful precedent in *VIFAM*. The producer already had a show like that in mind, so he wanted a fusion of that previous success and my style. That's how *LAYZNER* came to be.

ANIMERICA: As to your influences, do you watch American TV shows or movies?

Takahashi: Well, when it comes to my generation—you can also say that I don't keep up to date—I like older movies. Hmm, yeah, they all tend to be old movies. The "showdown at O.K. Corral" movie, the one with Henry Fonda. [MY *DARLING CLEMENTINE*—Ed.] My preferences tend to be conditional—for example, it's Henry Fonda's O.K. Corral movie, although I like John Ford's directing too. I also like the theme song in *THE GOD-FATHER*, the one that plays in the opening of the first movie.

ANIMERICA: The "Love Theme from The Godfather"?

Takahashi: Yes. So let's see—I've only seen recent movies sporadically—well, in that sense, it wasn't really American movies that I liked, but American TV shows. I liked *KOJAK* and another detective show that was

made before that. I watched a lot of westerns from that period. But I think I've been influenced more from Japanese movies. I'm not sure in what form, but I'm sure that *VOTOMS* has the influences from *Nikkatsu* movies from the late Showa 20s to the mid 30s. [Late 1940s-1955—Ed.] The series of movies back then that doesn't seem to be taking place in any specific country, such as the *WATARI DORI* ("Migrating Birds") series, and *YUJIRO*. I'm not sure myself how these movies have influenced my works, though.

ANIMERICA: Would *TAIYŌ ZOKU* ("Clan of the Sun") be one of them?

Takahashi: *TAIYŌ ZOKU* has a definite location. It takes place at the Shonan beach in Japan. The movies starring Keiichi Akagi and Akira Kobayashi were really obscure about where they were taking place. They'd be toting guns and hauling a guitar on a horse. I'm sure they were made by people who liked American westerns. So I've got a derivative influence from movies already inspired by someone else's works.

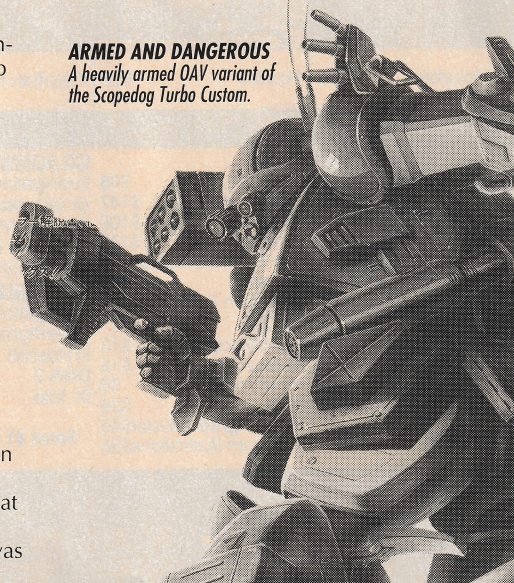
ANIMERICA: Do you have a favorite writer?

Takahashi: Well, most of them have nothing to do with animation. I'm not familiar with foreign writers, and I mostly like Japanese drinking novels. For example, Hitomi Yamaguchi and—although he's passed away—Takeshi Kaiko. I like their works.

ANIMERICA: Do you have a consistent theme throughout your works?

Takahashi: I don't have a consistent theme, but one thing about myself that always shows is a distrust of authorities. However much the current situation may put them in good light, I'll always bear a distrust somewhere. I think this consistently shows up not only in my works but in my private life too. My generation's political high points would be the student demonstrations against the U.S./Japan Mutual Defense Treaty renewals in 1960 and 1970. In 1960, everyone was

ARMED AND DANGEROUS
A heavily armed OAV variant of the Scopedog Turbo Custom.



left wing, at least in spirit. I didn't trust the left wing, either, though. I always think it's dangerous if everyone blindly follows one single value. I've thought like that since elementary school. So that's something that will always show up in my work, and therefore, I don't think I'll ever be able to create a really big hit. That's because I think this lifelong belief I've had will distract me. I think one needs some kind of respect for authority in order to indulge in the kind of euphoria that makes everyone feel good from a hit film. I lack that, so I don't think I can ever make a really big hit.

ANIMERICA: You've been involved in more lighthearted shows such as **GRANZORT** and **WATARU**....

Takahashi: Yes, as the scriptwriter. I think the creator aspect in me is just a small portion of myself. Outside of that, if anybody has a need for my skills, I'm there. What we do as animators is a group effort, after all, so if you're not the core of a project, I think it's fair to offer your skills in any way that's needed.

ANIMERICA: In that sense, which do you enjoy more, being the leader of your own project, or offering your skills for someone else's project?

Takahashi: Well, first of all, I very much like the simple task of creating a story. I also like working with words. It's not exactly the same as *rakugo* or that I blindly trust the power of words, but I am attracted to words.

ANIMERICA: What is your view on war?

Takahashi: I think it's something that won't go away. As long as humans remain human, it won't go away. That's without making a value judgment on whether that's good or bad. I think it's human nature. Some have described war as "inhuman," but I think that's wrong. It's a very human thing.

ANIMERICA: In **VOTOMS**, after the "Uoodo" chapter ends and the "Kummen" chapter begins, Chirico has changed from being a sort of gladiator to a mercenary. Does that follow your idea that there's war somewhere all the time?

Takahashi: He doesn't want or aspire to become a mercenary, but he just ends up there. Chirico already has a sense of emptiness when he first shows up in Uoodo, but his despair is even deeper in the Kummen chapter. This is something that isn't depicted in the TV show, but the OAV **LAST RED SHOULDER** fills in the gaps. In the TV show, Chirico is separated from Fyana in Uoodo, and the Kummen chapter starts with his monologue—"I've come to Kummen to forget everything." Well, that doesn't make sense. This is a guy who's never known a woman. He finally finds someone he likes, and it seems she likes him too. How can it be that he wants to forget that all of a sudden? This sudden leap was planned from the beginning and is explained in the OAV. Chirico bands together with his wartime colleagues to seek vengeance on those who betrayed him. He bumps into Fyana in the process and finds her kissing Epsilon and is heartbroken. So it's this broken heart that drives him to become a mercenary in Kummen.

ANIMERICA: One thing mecha fans always

seem to mention when talking about their favorite shows are the toys and model kits. How are sponsors like toy companies involved in the content of a mecha show?

Takahashi: That's been different over the years, and also different by show. Fifteen years ago, toy companies would base their toys on the mecha that showed up in the show. Ten years ago, toy companies would make requests about using specific mecha in the show, based on past experience of what toys sold well. Since five years ago or so, the toy companies have been effectively imposing their products into the content of the show. So it's been different throughout the years. I'd like to reset this trend, so in the next *yūsha* show, I'll still have to respect my client, but if there's a conflict between the story and the client's merchandising, I'm going to talk it through with them so that the story prevails. I think my biggest job as producer will be to champion the director and his show.

ANIMERICA: Do you ever build models of your own robots?

Takahashi: No, in fact, I've never built any models. Since I was born, I've never bought one. I've been given a few, but I give those away in return, so I haven't built anything.

ANIMERICA: So what do you do when you're not working? Do you have any hobbies?

Takahashi: Well, I lie around. [LAUGHS] Oh, actually, I like to play, so I play golf or go to the gym and sweat it out. I've also been going to the race track for the last thirty years. I'm not a real gambler, but I enjoy horse racing.

ANIMERICA: You sound pretty athletic.

Takahashi: Not really. I think I'm just your average Japanese guy, playing golf, worrying about his health, betting on horses, and drinking.

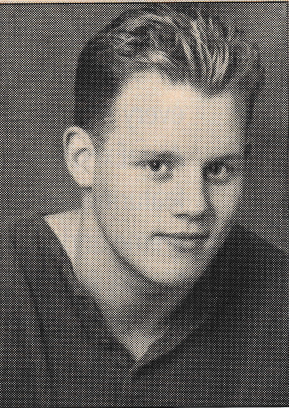
ANIMERICA: Do you have any advice for aspiring animation directors?

Takahashi: I don't have anything specific, but you have to constantly re-assess the skills and the techniques you've learned as you go through your twenties and thirties and forties. If you don't learn to measure yourself, you'll soon be unable to do your work. You have to keep on evaluating what you're good at, what you can do, and how much you're *willing* to do. You have to evaluate your assets as a creator. If your evaluation is off, you'll end up spending your time on futile efforts, and by the time you realize it, you'll have disappeared from the production scene.

ANIMERICA: Finally, do you have a message for your fans in the English-speaking world?

Takahashi: Well, I've always been proud of my style. I'll strive to find a new visual style in my next project, so I'd like you to look forward to seeing it. I'm trying to come up with a new style of a robot story, so I hope you'll want to see it.

ANIMERICA: Thank you very much. ☆



Toby Proctor

Previous Roles: (Animation): "Darien/Tuxedo Mask," *SAILOR MOON*; "Flash Gordon," *FLASH GORDON*; *BABAR*; *ULTRAFORCE*. (Live-action, stage): "Oliver," *OLIVER!* (Live-action, TV): *THE SHADOW BUILDER*; *THE ROAD TO AVONLEA*

Interviewer: Julie Davis

How did you get started in voice-acting?

Well, I've been an actor for about fourteen years, and about a year ago I was asked by my agency to take a course on vocal acting with Tracy Moore—the original "Sailor Moon," actually, the original "Serena"—just because they didn't have very many voices on their roster. So, I just happened to connect with it, and about

three weeks after that course, I landed *SAILOR MOON*, and about a week after that, I landed the *FLASH GORDON* animated series. So it was just a stroke of luck, but it's hard. Voice-acting's a hard thing to do—it's hard to take yourself away. I mean for me, I've always been acting with my entire body, and now it's just my voice.

You started acting fourteen years ago—what was the first thing you did?

I did the role of "Oliver" in *OLIVER!*, the musical production. I did mostly stage musicals for the first eight years.

Did you always want to be an actor?

Well, I grew up in an acting family—all of my family are actors, and I've never known a nine-to-five job. My mom's a director/choreographer—she used to be a ballerina—and my dad's been a radio announcer for thirty-five years, now he's an actor. My brother's an actor and musician...so it's been in the blood, since...I guess when I was six years old, and could make my own words and say, "Hey, I wanna act, put me on stage!"

What other shows have you done? TV movies...

TV movies, Movies-of-the-Week...actually I just finished a Bram Stoker feature that will come out in February—as far as I know—called *THE SHADOW BUILDER*. I play a nerd on that, a nerd named "Harry Price." I do stand-up comedy as well.

You do?

Yeah, I do stand-up comedy, and stuff like that.

Have you done any TV series work?

Well, I do day-players on Canadian series...there's one called *THE ROAD TO AVONLEA*, I did some stuff for them. But mostly it's American Movies-of-the-Week that are filmed up in Canada, because it's a lot cheaper...for about the last five years of my career.

As far as animation goes, FLASH GORDON is probably a "pre-lay" type of show, right?

It is a pre-lay show, and it's quite wonderful. Paul Schaffer from *LATE NIGHT* is working on that as well, he's playing my cohort "Dr. Zarkoff." I'm playing "Flash," and that will be out in September. It'll be like a Saturday-morning kind of cartoon.

Have you seen what it's going to look like yet?

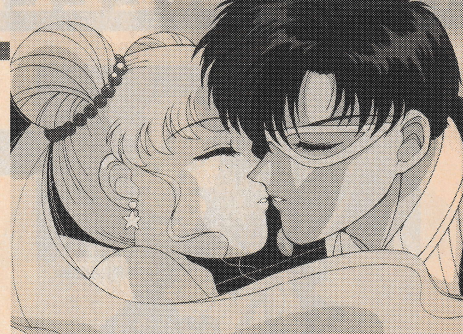
Yes I did, I saw my first episode the other week. It is very cool, and I was very pleased. Usually, I'll watch myself and say, "Uh...I could've done *this*," but for this one I was very, very pleased. I was pretty proud of myself.

So you've done a pre-lay series such as FLASH GORDON, and a Japanese-animated series such as SAILOR MOON. What would you say is the main difference between American animation and Japanese animation?

There is a huge difference—you're talking two different cultures. Japanese culture seems a lot more in tune with horoscopes, past lives...detail, a lot more detail. American productions are very off-the-cuff, quick action, dropping pianos on someone's foot, right? That's good, but there's no sense of *education* in there. When you watch *SAILOR MOON*, there are very childish episodes, but there are also very *dramatic* episodes, and some are very educational, about yin and yang and a "zen" kind of feel. I mean, young people are being subjected to learning about other cultures, and I think that's what Japanese animation *does* show. There is a definite maturity, but not so much that young kids can't understand.

So you've seen the whole series?

I have. Well, I've seen every episode I've been in—I believe I've been in every one. If I wasn't, I made a point of seeing it anyway, just to see what happens. It's like a soap opera—once you're hooked....



What type of character would you say you're typically cast for? The "young hero" type, mostly?

Yeah, young hero—because of my voice quality, which they like. Which I didn't know—I mean, it's your voice! You never think about it. And then the studio says, "You have a great voice for a young hero!" and I say, "Wow, okay...maybe." So that's basically what I do. I also do character voices, though—I have character voices in *FLASH*, and in other series I've done just like bit parts on, because in doing comedy, you have to have that sort of thing in your voice range.

What other animated series have you done?

I did *ULTRAFORCE*, and some *BABAR*.

BABAR, really? Was that recent?

Oh, that was *long* time ago. So that's probably not even worth saying, because that's not even my voice anymore. I was probably all of ten, maybe. So nothing crazy, because this is a very new thing for me—just for the last year or so—but it's been a hell of an experience.

What would you say is the strangest voice-role you've ever played?

Quite seriously, I think Tuxedo Mask is a little bit strange. It's just my personal opinion, but if I were a superhero, I'd come more prepared, maybe with a sword rather than a rose. Or a least a rose that had a little more *strength* to it, that could at least penetrate a chest cavity. [LAUGHS] Just to be perfectly honest, I don't see myself fighting in a tux, and I thought that was really strange...but it also has something to do with class, too. But that's just me...I'm American-minded, I guess. It's funny, but he's also a strange superhero, because superheroes mostly fight, and he's mostly into believing in yourself—more power of the mind rather than hurting someone with your fist. But I must admit, I wouldn't mind hauling off and punching a guy one time in a series. Just to make that sound. [LAUGHS] I seriously think that's one of the weirdest ones I've played. You can't get any freakier than that.

Have you ever gotten fan mail?

Fan mail? Actually...one. [LAUGHS]

Just one?

Well, to date, anyway—one to my agency, with my name on it. I mean, I've had mail when I was doing stage shows, but I don't really consider that fan mail. That was more like, "Oh, that was really great, give me an autograph," but *fan mail* is when someone watches you over a period of time, and enjoys it, and basically wants to tell you this. I think it's a wonderful thing, and it's very flattering, because quite seriously, this is my job—it's a wonderful job, but who am I, really? I'm just a guy who was lucky enough to have a talent, and was able to nurture it and work hard at it. But basically I've had one piece of fan mail from a young girl in Beverly Hills, California, who asked for my signature, and she apologized profusely if she took me away from anything...I thought it was wonderful. And she left her phone number, so I actually called her as well, and went "Hey, Meatball-head!" [LAUGHS] It kinda surprised her, and her mom got on the line for a moment, and I told her what was going on...and the girl was really freaked out. I mean, it's people like her who make my job a living, you know? Without people like that, I would not be existing like this. I'd be still working as a bartender.

Did you used to watch cartoons when you grew up?

Were you a big cartoon fan?

I watched a lot of *ROAD RUNNER*, a lot of the Mel Blanc kind of stuff, *PORKY PIG* and all that...but that was in the early ages, and then I stopped for years. And then all of a sudden, I was asked to do animation, and I was told that was the best way to learn it is to watch cartoons, and now I'm a cartoon *freak*. I watch so many cartoons that it's sad. My *life* is a cartoon now.

What's some of your favorites these days?

Oh, well...*THE SIMPSONS*. Come on now, I think as far as being an actor, those are some of the best characterizations I've ever seen. They're such solid characters, and you can see the difference between the first year or two and now, and it's incredible the way they've brought those characters to life, and as an actor, you have to respect that. That is a talent in itself, to keep a continuity with those characters every day, and make people just laugh so hard. And it's the writing, too. The writing is wonderful. And you know, *X-MEN* and *BAT-MAN*, all those kind of things.

What would you say is your favorite movie of all time?

Oooh, favorite movie? Well...*PEE-WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE*.

Really? Are you a big Pee-Wee fan?

Yep, I've seen *PEE-WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE* about sixty-eight times. Admittedly, the last time was probably about three months ago...I don't know what it is, I mean I'm crazy, so it's a cult thing now, knowing everything...just knowing the voice and it was a great character, and it was funny, it just became a ritual. Before I did anything, before I'd get into a competition or anything, I'd just watch it and laugh. A little strange, but I don't profess to be anybody normal.

Who would you say is your childhood hero?

Childhood hero, wow. Probably my dad. Because, as much a cliché as that might sound, it was my dad. My father is one of those guys who...I mean, he's in the business as well, but he's so bloody talented, and works so hard, and it's sometimes hard to see, because it seems like he isn't rewarded as much as he should be. He's a dynamite guy, and he's been working for years, and years, and years—

As an actor?

As an actor, yes, and as a radio announcer. He's very, very accomplished, and he has a lot of notoriety, but he's the type of guy where the minute you meet him, you like him. The same goes for my mum, but as a hero, it would be my dad. My biggest thing always was, when I grew up, I wanted to be my dad.

Well, since SAILOR MOON is a romance...do you believe in love at first sight?

Actually it's funny you say that, because my parents—getting back to my parents—talk about love at first sight! My mom and dad met while doing a play—they were about thirty, they met, they were engaged three days later, and a week later they were married. So that's pretty much love at first sight, I think.

That's what I'd call it. Damn.

And they've been together ever since, and they're the happiest couple you'd ever see...he still calls her his "best gal," and they've been with each other every day of their lives since.

So would you say you believe in predestiny?

Ah...I don't know about *destiny*...maybe I do. Because some things happen for a reason—I think everything happens for a reason, and I guess for that to happen is destiny. Yeah, I think so, because that's just good karma—you get what's coming to you. Say you do something wrong, or wrongful, willingly...I think that it will come back to you somehow. And if you do something right, willingly, all your life, you'll get the goods. It may seem like good guys finish last, but I think in the end, you really do win.

What would you say is your ideal of a hero?

An ideal hero I think is...well, just being a young boy growing up, you think it has to be this monstrous man, but I think now it would be someone who would be sensitive. I guess a typical nineties guy, really. You know, having to do both, having to fight battles—much like Tuxedo Mask, I guess, without really putting out his fist. But more a showman, and using intelligence rather than brawn. Because as we're evolving, we no longer need these muscles.

In the future, would you say that you'd like to do more voice-acting, more live-action, both...?

Well, to tell you the truth, I am loving voice-acting, and I would like to do a lot more, because it's completely anonymous. For someone who wants longevity in this career, you have to make sure you don't sell yourself out very quickly or get overexposed. Michael J. Fox, I mean, look at that—he's still trying so hard. I could not be that, it would kill me. Now he has to go low-key or into producing, and I'm not really into the producing side of it. Maybe voice-directing, up the road, I would definitely love to direct voice. But, right now I would rather do off-camera, because it really doesn't matter what you look like, and it's great, you know? It's not very taxing.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I would probably say doing a lot of voice, because that is where I'm going to put my heart, and I think that if I work hard enough, I'll be able to achieve that. Hopefully, my *FLASH GORDON* series will continue, because it's a great series, and if we get more seasons, hur-ray. And if not, then I'm just going to have to work harder and get something else, but you don't quit. As I said, for longevity, and complete anonymity right now, I'm going to deal with this, because I really, really love it.

Do you have any kind of closing message for the fans?

Well, thank you very much. You make my life complete, and without you, I couldn't eat—and that rhymes! Hur-ray! ☆

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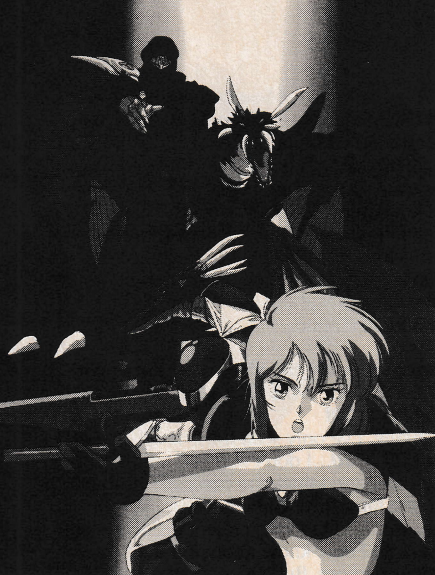
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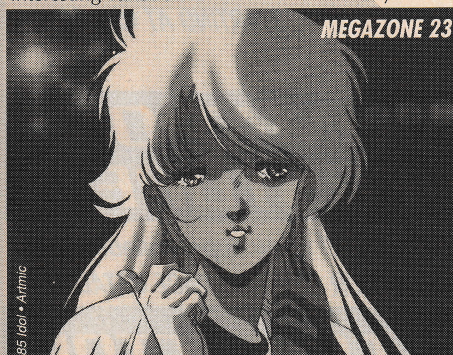
Noburo Ishiguro with interpreter Takayuki Karahashi

ANIME Q&A WITH NOBURO ISHIGURO

The legendary director answers your questions about a few of his many projects at his panel at Anime Expo '96. Look to future issues of ANIMERICA for more of Mr. Ishiguro's anime memories in a regular feature!

Q: There's a rumor that *MEGAZONE 23* was originally to be a TV show. How did it end up getting released as an OAV?

A: That's true—it was originally meant to be a TV show that would come on the air after *GENESIS CLIMBER MOSPEADA* had finished. As I said before, in *MOSPEADA* you have a motorcycle which transforms into a robot. This idea came from the A.I.C. studio; but they actually had three different patterns for the transformation sequence—one was used in *MOSPEADA*, and there were two others which were meant to be used in sequels to it. Gakken was the toy sponsor for the show, and it was eighty percent certain that the sequel was a go. But at the eleventh hour, Gakken pulled out. We already had a staff assembled, and as a makeshift solution, we decided to go for an original video. When you see the *MEGAZONE 23* OAV, that's actually thirteen episodes' worth of story crammed into it, and that wasn't even to the conclusion. We didn't have an ending per se in the video—according to the original ending, evil prevailed, and that would have been bad, but we also thought it would be an interesting variation to have it end that way.



© 1995 Ide & Arimura

[LAUGHS] Actually, the original working title was "Omega-zone," but when we tried to register that, well, the watchmaker.... [LAUGHS] Actually, it turned out that anything starting with "Omega" was considered not good by them. So, we just removed the "O" and made it *MEGAZONE*.

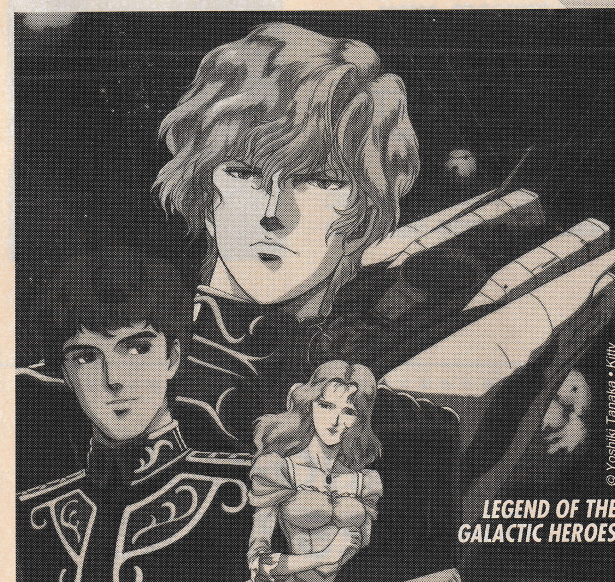
Q: What's in the future for *LEGEND OF THE GALACTIC HEROES*?

A: *LEGEND OF THE GALACTIC HEROES* is a 110-volume epic. Right now, Volume 97 is in production, so there's only twelve more episodes to go after that. I was supposed to finish the storyboards for Episode 109 before coming here, but I didn't, so as soon as I get back, I'll have lots and lots to do. This project, just now nearing completion, has taken over ten years, but I've hung on until the end. So far there have been over 150 characters developed, and 150 voice-actors involved. Some of them are quite old, and we were seriously thinking about pre-recording some of their dialogue. [LAUGHS] There's already one character that's completely unrecoverable. The Japanese voice-actor who originated the role of "Yang Wen-Li," Kei Tomiyama, died in September of 1995. Now, it's true that the character of Yang Wen-Li was killed in the previous season, but he will be turning up in flashbacks, and we were thinking what to do about his voice. We seriously considered the option of recreating his voice through computer simulation, but that would blow the entire budget on his voice alone. So we looked for someone with a similar voice, and we've already auditioned over thirty people, but although they sound alike in spots, it's not the same man. So we decided that Yang will show up many, many times in flashback, but he'll never speak. [LAUGHS] One day there was one episode where they had fifty characters in a single episode. This was a conference scene, and most of them had only one or two lines to speak. So most of the voice-actors were spending the time in the waiting room. Some production people walked by, and saw all these voice-actors together, and they wondered if there was some kind of union meeting that day. [LAUGHS] A lot of things such as painting and production finishing are farmed out to various countries, but *LEGEND OF THE GALACTIC HEROES* is probably the first anime production ever to be farmed out from Japan to North Korea. *LEGEND* is based on a ten-volume series of novels, and the anime is almost word-to-word faithful to them. I don't think this is the right way to make an anime, but the producer of the series happens to be a big fan of the novels, and if we tried to deviate even a little from the novels, he'd be fuming. [LAUGHS] But the original story is pretty good, so it seems like once you start watching it, you're addicted to it, and there seem to be quite a few fans. It may be the story and voice-actors who are really keeping it popular; perhaps we animators can't really brag as much as we'd like.

was going to be a toy. Sometimes when you have a transforming machine, it looks goofy in mid-transformation; but the Valkyrie always looked good at any point. I don't think that's something we actually planned on happening, but it's a beautiful mechanism that worked. These days, you can find lots of things that transform into robots—a bullet train, an automobile. When one person pioneers a method, everyone can follow it. But the plain fact about the Valkyrie is that it always looked good.

Q: Since you were the director of the original *SPACE CRUISER YAMATO*, what do you think of *YAMATO 2520*?

A: Actually, I've only seen the first episode of *YAMATO 2520*. I don't think it's something for me to compare; I think the comparison should be left to the fans. [LAUGHS] I only found out about it because they had asked me at first if I wanted to direct it. So I only know about it; I don't know how it turned out. But I guess they will try avoiding similarities with mine.



© Yoshitaka Tanaka • Kikkawa

Q: Is it true that you teach animation-directing?

A: Well, I have my own directing job first, so I teach on a part-time basis. A lot of it is seminar-style, teaching how to make a story. Basically, the students bring in a project, and we debate whether it's a do-able idea. Young people often think in fan terms, and write stories that are of interest only among themselves. But when you become a pro, you have to have a guarantee that there's going to be an audience for your material, so that's the kind of instruction that I try to give them.

Q: Who would be your choices for the cast in the *YAMATO* live-action film, said to be in development right now?

A: Eh? Fact is stranger than fiction! I can't imagine what kind of casting there would be; I can't imagine what kind of story there would be, first of all. [LAUGHS] Will it be the original story retold? Speaking of which, there's going to be a new *YAMATO* live-action film, and I'm excited about it.



Hideaki Anno returns to Anime Expo after attending the very first AX, five years ago, to field questions about his latest work, **NEON GENESIS EVANGELION**.

VIRTUAL PANEL! MEET HIDEAKI ANNO

Sound bites from **Studio Gainax's** director of **GUNBUSTER**, **NADIA: THE SECRET OF BLUE WATER**, and the recent **NEON GENESIS EVANGELION** from his panel at **Anime Expo '96**.

On the unique appearance of the Evangelion Units
"There is a monster in Japan called the *oni*, which has two horns sticking out of its head, and the overall image of the Eva is based on that. I wanted also to have an image that beneath the image of that robot monster is a human. It's not really a robot, but a giant human, so it's different from other robot mecha such as those in **GUNDAM**."

On the GUNBUSTER's alternate future—it is dominated by Russia?

"There's a Japanese Empire. In the year 2000, the U.S. and Japan had a war, and Japan occupied Hawaii. Sorry."

On the decision to have the final episode of GUNBUSTER in black-and-white

"When you have color, you have an extra dimension of information. Color would have gotten in the way of the sense of scale we wanted to portray with the black-hole bomb. Also—no one had ever done it before."

On the date 2015 which figures in both GUNBUSTER and EVANGELION

"This date is from an old show I liked as a kid, and it was also the year in which **TETSUWAN ATOM** took place."

On his favorite American animation

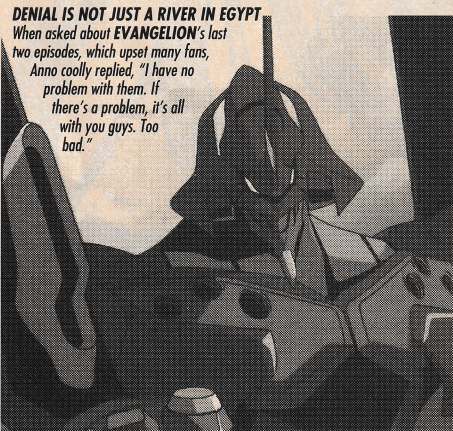
"Tex Avery, Tom and Jerry. I don't like Disney."

On anime creators who inspired him

"Outside of my staff, Mr. Yoshiyuki Tomino. Tomino's **MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM** and **SPACE**

DENIAL IS NOT JUST A RIVER IN EGYPT

When asked about **EVANGELION's** last two episodes, which upset many fans, Anno coolly replied, "I have no problem with them. If there's a problem, it's all with you guys. Too bad."



RUNAWAY IDEON are my favorite anime besides **YAMATO**. Hayao Miyazaki, with whom I worked on **NAUSICAA**, animating the scene where the God-Soldier fires, was also a mentor to me."

On computer games

"I myself have no interest in them; however, I am interested in computer graphics for animation."

On how the protagonist of EVANGELION reflects Anno himself

"Shinji does reflect my character, both in conscious and unconscious part. In the process of making **EVANGELION**, I found out what kind of person I am. I acknowledged that I'm a fool."

On his religious beliefs

"I don't belong to any kind of organized religion, so I guess I could be considered agnostic. Japanese spiritualism holds that there is '*kami*' (spirit) in everything, and that's closer to my own beliefs." When asked if he were a vegetarian, like the titular character of **NADIA**, or **EVA's** "Rei," he answered: "I like tofu. I just don't want to eat meat or fish. It's not for religious reasons."

On expressing himself through animation

"Animation makes sense to people in the process of their seeing it. So when people get confused by my themes, or cannot get the overall message, the connection is not really going through, because it didn't satisfy that person. So there would be less meaning for that individual. There has to be a relationship that comes into being between the person watching and what the character's saying in the animation itself."

On what he thought of PATLABOR 2 and GHOST IN THE SHELL

"I haven't seen **GHOST** yet, but I think that **PATLABOR** is really good. I liked the scenes better in the second film."

On EVANGELION's success

"As for all the merchandising, it's just a matter of economics. It's strange that **EVANGELION** has been a hit. Everyone in it is *sick!*"

On his next project

"Another TV show, probably some kind of space adventure."

On THE WINGS OF HONNEAMISE

"The director of **HONNEAMISE**, Hiroyuki Yamaga, is pretty serious as a matter of character, certainly—so he doesn't really think of compromising with the audiences. Therefore it wasn't a radical film from the Yamaga's perspective. There's something like a sequel planned, but it's been stopped for now. Yamaga wants to make it 'the final anime of this century.' He wants to make it happen."

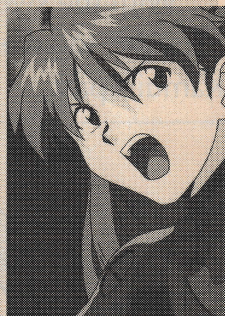
On the future of the anime industry

"The creators have to change their frame of mind for the field to advance. And that doesn't look too hopeful in today's Japan. It's in a critical condition right now. I don't think there's any bright future. That's because the people who are producing it are not doing well. But there's also problems in the people who are watching it. The people who make it, and the people who want it, they're always wanting the same things. They've been making only similar things for the past ten years, with no sense of urgency. To get it going once more, you need to force people to go outside, to go out again."

On recent attempts to adapt anime from novels
"There are many novels written today which are made with the intention that they will be animated—so it's not that big a step. I think that **LEG-END OF THE GALACTIC HEROES** was well done, but then, it was that kind of a novel." When asked how he felt about the current trend toward Japanese historical content in manga and anime, he answered: "I have no interest in it; they are searching for a theme."

On his interests and hobbies

"My hobby is scuba diving, and besides science-fiction, I like to read romance novels written by



PRETTY WOMEN

Anno names Asuka (above) his favorite **EVANGELION** character because "she's cute." When told that the American audience tended to favor Misato (left), he answers, "I'm surprised. In Japan, the overwhelming favorite is Rei (above left). They can't handle strong women such as Misato and Asuka."

women. Since I'm a male, I don't really know the emotions of women. And because I want to understand their feelings, and create more realistic female characters, this is something I have to pursue."

To an American fan who boasted of having spent all his schoolbook money on anime goods...

"You're a fool. Study harder. If I could go back in time and tell my college-age self something, I would tell him to study harder, too."

On where he would like to travel

"I want to see the universe, outer space—it's one of the places I want to go while I'm still living. When I was a child...I thought that it would be possible to go out into space when I grew up. And that's not possible now. But I'd like to go to the moon, or ride on the Space Shuttle."

On getting into the anime industry

"If you want to get into anime, my best advice to you as a creator is to please have diverse interests in things besides animation. Look outward, first of all. Most anime makers are basically autistic. They have to try and reach out, and truly communicate with others. I would guess that the greatest thing anime has ever achieved is the fact that we're holding a dialogue right here and now." ★

Ranma 1/2

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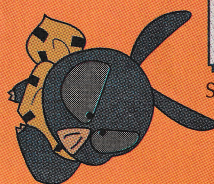
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